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Your Reference: P353087GB
Application No: GB0521011.7

The Patent Office
Patents Directorate

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18 November 2005

Dear Sirs

Patents Act 1977:
Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 and 18(3)

Latest date for reply: 19 October 2006

I enclose two copies of my search and examination report and a copy of the citations.

By the above date you should either file amendments to meet the objections in the report or make observations on them. If you do not, the application may be refused.

Other search results

If you have applied to another patent office for a patent for this invention you will be receiving from them the results of their search. If you decide to proceed with the present application you are asked to provide me with a copy of any such official search report; or to email identifying details of the cited documents (including any category assigned in the report) to the email address above.

Cut-off date This request applies to search reports that you have received before the date when you send a response to our first examination report under section 18(3) or section 18(4); if you make no response to an initial section 18(4) report the cut-off date is two months after the date of that report. Tell us about a search report sooner rather than later if that would allow it to be considered during our first examination.

¹**Use of E-mail:** Please note that e-mail should be used for correspondence only.



Exceptions You do not have to supply details of a search report that (1) shows a nil response, or (2) has been published by WIPO or EPO, or (3) you have already supplied to us on a previous GB application.

Publication

I estimate that, provided you have met all the formal requirements, preparations for publication of your application will be completed soon after **14 March 2006**. At this time you will receive a letter confirming the exact date when the preparations for publication will be completed. This letter will also tell you the publication number and date of publication of your application.

Withdrawal/amendment

If you wish to withdraw your application before it is published you must do so before the preparations for publication are complete. **WARNING** – after preparations for publication are complete it will NOT be possible to withdraw your application from publication.

If you wish to file amended claims for inclusion with the published application you must do so before the preparations for publication are completed. If you write to the Office less than 3 weeks before 14 March 2006 please mark your letter prominently:

"URGENT - PUBLICATION IMMINENT".

Yours faithfully

Mr Haydn Gupwell
Examiner

Important information about combined search and examination

I also ask that you take note of the following points. These might have a bearing on the future stages of your application because the examination report has been sent to you before your application has been published.

- (a) You may file voluntary amendments before making a full response to my examination report. We will publish with your application any new or amended claims you file voluntarily or as a full response, provided that they are received before preparations for publication are completed. It would help us when you file amendments before publication if you could prominently indicate in a covering letter whether or not the amendments are intended as a full response to the examination report.
- (b) If you file a full response to the examination report before your application is published I will consider it as soon as possible. However, if this would disrupt the publication of your application, I would have to delay



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taking any action until the application had been published. This delay could be up to 3 months, depending upon when we receive your response.

- (c) There is another situation when there might be a delay between you filing a full response and the Patent Office responding to it. This would arise if you met all my objections but your application had not or had only recently been published. I could not report the outcome of my re-examination until I was satisfied that the search was complete for documents published before the priority date of your invention and that anybody interested in the application has had three months following publication of the application to make observations on the patentability of your invention.
- (d) Provided that the requirements of the Act have been met, I can send your application to grant as early as three months after publication. Before doing so I will bring the original search up to date and raise with you any further objection that might result from this top-up search. However, there is a possibility that at that time I may not have access to all the patent applications published after the priority date of your invention and of possible relevance to your application. If this is the case I would have to complete the search after grant and if necessary raise any new found novelty objection then.



Application No: GB0521011.7
Claims searched: 1-12

Examiner: Mr Haydn Gupwell
Date of search: 17 November 2005

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X	1-3, 9, 10 and 12	JP08026054 A (NHK SPRING CO LTD) see abstract and figure 2 disclosing substrate 21 and foam 26 around the substrate, where the foam on the back surface of the substrate may said to be impact countermeasures
A	None	US2005/0186388 A1 (MEKAS ET AL) discloses two shot moulding of a trim assembly, see figure 2b but has no impact countermeasures.

Categories:

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
& Member of the same patent family	E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^X:

B5A

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC⁰⁷

B29C

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

EPODOC, WPI



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Patents Act 1977

Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 & 18(3)

Plurality of invention

1. Your claims define two separate inventions not forming a single inventive concept. The inventions are:

- a. An automotive trim assembly as defined by claims 1 and 10 with a substrate having a front surface and a back surface made from a first material, a cover member made from a second foamed material moulded onto at least a portion of the front surface of the first material and an impact countermeasure made from the second foamed material moulded on at least a portion of the back surface and adapted to absorb an impact. (*The substrate may be made from any material and therefore may be made other than the two shot moulding method of claim 13.*)
- b. A method of making an automotive trim assembly, as defined in claim 13, in a two shot moulding operation comprising moulding a substrate by injecting a first curable material in a first shot of the moulding operation and then moulding a cover member and an impact countermeasure onto the substrate by injecting a curable foamed material during a second shot of the moulding operation. (*The substrate and the cover member/impact countermeasure are both mouldable materials.*)

You will need to amend your claims, so that they relate to only one invention or inventive concept. You will also need to make consequential amendments to the description. You may wish to consider filing a divisional application. Any such application should normally be filed no later than 3 months before the expiry of the period for putting the present application in order.

Scope of search

2. In accordance with Section 17(6), only the first of these inventions has been searched. The other invention can be searched if you wish. In this case you will have to file a further Form 9A/77.



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[Examination Report contd.]

What this report covers

3. I have not been able to consider the novelty or obviousness of the unsearched invention.

Novelty

4. The invention as defined in claims 1-3, 9, 10 and 12 is not new because it has already been disclosed in the following document:

JP08026054 A (NHK SPRING CO LTD) see abstract and figure 2 disclosing substrate 21 and foam 26 around the substrate, where the foam on the back surface of the substrate may said to be impact countermeasures.

5. The above citation relates to a pillar cover device for an automobile and discloses a substrate covered on its front and back surfaces with a foam material adapted to give a soft feel. The foam material on the back surface of the substrate has two rib shaped longitudinal protrusions (no number) which act as impact countermeasures. It is therefore considered that claims 1-3, 9, 10 and 12 are not novel.

6. Amendment is required to overcome the above objections.